

unit investigations of Bridgepoint Education and Career Education Corporation have gone dark. The cops are being taken off the beat.

Bridgepoint—owner of the notorious Ashford University—has a long record of abuse. Last year, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ordered the company to pay \$30 million for deceptive acts and practices, including lying to students about their obligations under student loans. Bridgepoint is currently being sued by the California attorney general for defrauding and deceiving students. It is also facing investigations by State attorneys general in Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, and by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has also taken action to withdraw Ashford's eligibility to participate in the GI Bill because of its failure to comply with VA regulations. But, as the New York Times article points out, Bridgepoint has friends in high places when it comes to the Trump administration. A former consultant for Bridgepoint is now the Director of Strategic Communications at the White House.

Then there is Robert Eitel, who was hired by Secretary DeVos in February 2017 as a special assistant. For the first 9 weeks of his Department of Education tenure, Eitel was actually on an unpaid leave of absence from Bridgepoint. You heard that right—he was an employee of the Department of Education and continued as an employee of one of the most predatory for-profit colleges in this country at the same time. ABC News reports Eitel had a hand in dismantling the Department's borrower defense rule, which would have helped students who were defrauded by for-profit colleges like Ashford. How is that for a fox guarding the henhouse?

But we are not done yet. Don't forget about Career Education Corporation, which reports that it is currently under investigation by 23 States attorneys general, including Lisa Madigan of Illinois. In 2013, Career Education Corporation agreed to pay \$10.25 million in a settlement with the New York attorney general over job placement rate inflation, an act of fraud. The company has been investigated by the FTC and the SEC. The Department of Education even placed one of its schools, American Intercontinental University, on heightened cash monitoring for concerns related to its administrative capability. But the enforcement unit's investigation into fraud by the company has come to a screeching halt, according to the New York Times. Who at the Department of Education is connected to Career Education Corporation? Well, in addition to working for Bridgepoint, Mr. Eitel was previously a top lawyer for that company, Career Education Corporation.

Then there is Diane Auer Jones, who was previously a senior vice president for Career Education Corporation and

was hired by Secretary DeVos to be her senior adviser on postsecondary education. Also, the Department's recently confirmed general counsel, Carlos Muniz, previously provided consulting services to the same company.

The DeVos-orchestrated takeover of the Department of Education by the for-profit college industry is an embarrassment. It is an affront to students, their families, and to taxpayers. The Trump administration and Secretary DeVos are more concerned with protecting their rich buddies in the for-profit college industry than protecting America's students and their families. They don't seem to care that taxpayer dollars are being wasted as long as those dollars are going into their friends' pockets. It is shameful. It is scandalous. It has become routine in the U.S. Department of Education.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Democratic leader is recognized.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first let me thank my friend from Georgia for being able to go first and also thank my friend from Illinois, who has been passionate, strong, and effective when it comes to these for-profit colleges. He laid out a strong case.

Let me just make one more point which sometimes my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and the Trump administration and Ms. DeVos seem to forget. Who loses money when these for-profits take advantage of the kids? The Federal taxpayers do because the vast majority, the overwhelming percentage of funds that go to these for-profit colleges are from Federal student loans. So this is a waste of taxpayer money. Somehow our Republican colleagues—not all but some—and the Trump administration are willing to have the Treasury basically, in certain ways, be looted. They shrug their shoulders and let the for-profits keep doing it. It is an amazing contradiction. So I thank my colleague Senator DURBIN.

ZTE

Now, on the issues that I came to speak about here, Mr. President, it was reported by the Wall Street Journal that the Trump administration has agreed to relax sanctions on the Chinese telecom giant ZTE and remove the ban on ZTE from selling components and software in the United States. Instead, ZTE will be required to pay a fine and reorganize its board. It appears that, in exchange, China will lift some tariffs on U.S. agricultural products.

First, let me say this. I said this repeatedly, but I will say it again. I feel much closer in my views on China and how they treat us in terms of economic issues to President Trump and his views than I was to President Obama and President Bush and their views, who I don't think did enough. I had

public arguments with both President Obama and President Bush on this issue.

When Donald Trump started talking about going after China and making them play fair, I felt that was a good thing. When his administration fined ZTE and then put sanctions on them so they couldn't get American components, I said: Finally, we are doing something tough on China.

You can imagine my disappointment with the reports last night that President Trump, being advised so wrongly by people like Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, is backing off on this toughness and just giving them a slap on the wrist, a fine. If the reports are true, the Trump administration will have suffered a great defeat. The fines and board changes do absolutely nothing to protect American national or economic security.

It is my view that China proposed this because they know it doesn't do the real job. When President Trump shows weakness and backs off on the area where he has been toughest with China, it signals to them that they can roll over us issue after issue, where they have been rapacious in terms of how they deal with our economy, our intellectual property, and the ability of great American companies not to sell things in China.

The April 2018 commerce order penalizing ZTE says plainly that past fines have not and will not deter ZTE because they are financially backed by China's government and putting in place board changes doesn't coerce a company that takes its orders from China's Government.

The proposed solution is like a wet noodle. It is outrageous. I hope that Democrats and Republicans will join together in making sure, as House Republicans did in the Appropriations subcommittee, that the proposed sanctions against ZTE of not letting them buy American products and not letting them sell here will stick, but I don't think they will. All the handwriting is on the wall.

I will not divulge anything, but I did have a half-hour conversation with President Trump about this on Friday and with some of his advisers. So I am truly worried.

The penalties that are proposed by Secretary Mnuchin are penalties in name only. They are a diversion from the fact that it seems President Xi has outmaneuvered President Trump and Secretary Mnuchin. It should be President Xi who writes the book "The Art of the Deal" because he has taken us to the cleaners on ZTE.

Let me explain why this is such a bad deal. ZTE was sanctioned in 2016 for violating U.S. sanctions against North Korea and Iran. The company was further sanctioned when the Commerce Department discovered that ZTE had lied to the United States about its plans to rectify the violations. President Trump and Secretary Mnuchin, according to reports, have inexplicably

excused ZTE of these inexcusable violations.

What the President and Secretary Mnuchin are doing sends a dangerous signal to businesses around the world that the United States is willing to forgive sanction violations or reduce penalties. It emboldens foreign companies to play fast and loose with U.S. sanctions when we should be putting the fear of God into these companies, especially one that is as brazen as ZTE. If we don't uniformly enforce sanctions—a critical diplomatic tool used by administrations of both parties to pressure our adversaries—then, they will be far less effective. None other than Secretary of State Pompeo and Interior Secretary Zinke wrote a letter to President Obama in 2016 making this point, urging him to crack down on ZTE for this reason.

Imagine if Obama were President today and doing this? You can be sure that our Republican colleagues would be hollering. You can be sure that President Trump—he wouldn't be President then—would be hollering.

Even more important are the national security implications of removing the ban on U.S. companies selling ZTE components and software. This is the No. 1 reason that I am opposed to any change in the sanctions against ZTE. Allowing ZTE to make deals with U.S. companies to sell its products here would allow a foreign, state-backed firm access to our telecommunications network, prying open the door for ZTE to steal American data, hack our networks, and even conduct espionage, both economic and national security.

Don't take it from me. Here are what some of our leading Republicans have said in the administration.

The Republican-led FCC has said that allowing ZTE into the United States would pose a national security threat, saying it would give state-backed Chinese companies "hidden backdoors to our networks" that would allow them to "inject viruses and other malware, steal Americans' private data, spy on U.S. businesses, and more."

We all know that China is involved in stealing our intellectual property. There is no better way to do it than through ZTE, and we are going to let them be here and slap them on the wrist with a fine? That is a dereliction of our duty here in the Congress and the President's duty to protect us.

The Pentagon has banned ZTE phones, saying in a statement that "ZTE devices may pose an unacceptable risk to the Department's personnel, information, and mission." If our Defense Department is banning these phones, why are we allowing them to come into our country to do industrial espionage and steal our intellectual property from our companies?

Here is what FBI Director Chris Wray, appointed by President Trump, told the Senate Intelligence Committee in February. He was saying that we shouldn't use ZTE products or services, period. Here is what he said:

We're deeply concerned about the risks of allowing any company or entity that is beholden to foreign governments that don't share our values to gain positions of power inside our telecommunication networks. That provides the capacity to exert pressure or control over our telecommunications infrastructure. It provides the capacity to maliciously modify or steal information. And it provides the capacity to conduct undetected espionage.

The head of the FBI says letting ZTE in here will provide "the capacity to conduct undetected espionage."

After all those statements and so many more, every American should be alarmed by the reports that President Trump may allow ZTE into American markets. Putting our national security at risk for minor trade concessions is the very definition of shortsighted. Frankly, it would be a capitulation on the part of the Trump administration.

President Trump's instincts are to be tough on China. He should not let Secretary Mnuchin lead him astray, or others in the administration who may be urging it. I know that there are some—Mr. Lighthizer and Mr. Navarro—who understand the dangers here, and they are in the administration too. From press reports, they are arguing on the other side.

President Trump ought to come to his senses and stick with being tough on ZTE, stick with his instinct.

That is what I say to you, Mr. President. Please stick to your instincts and be tough on ZTE. Don't let these other members of your Cabinet lead you astray for short-term reasons that will hurt America dramatically in the long run.

The deal President Trump seems to be making is exactly the kind of deal that Donald Trump, before he was President Trump, would call weak or the worst deal ever. I hope these reports aren't true, but if they are, Democrats and Republicans must do something about it.

I know there are Members on the other side—I saw Senator RUBIO's tweets this morning—who are concerned about the national security of the United States with respect to ZTE. I will be reaching out to my Republican colleagues and to Members of my caucus and to anyone who is willing to turn this ship around to see what we can do legislatively.

The Chinese are worried about their security. It is a different type of security. They don't want their citizens to get information. So they exclude our best companies, our Googles, and our Facebooks. Now they are raising a fuss when we want to exclude ZTE, which has violated our sanctions and would allow the Chinese Government to spy on us—what hypocrisy. Are we going to go along with that? I hope not.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, over the past few days, the White House has put extraordinary, unusual, and inappropriate pressure on the Department of Justice and the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

On Sunday the President demanded a counterinvestigation of the Russia investigation, breaking longstanding and critical norms against political interference in law enforcement matters. Then, yesterday the President summoned the leaders of the Russia probe to the White House to pressure them into releasing sensitive and classified documents pertaining to the investigation by congressional Republicans. The White House planned to arrange a meeting where "highly classified and other information" will be shared with Members of Congress. It is highly irregular, inappropriate, and unprecedented. The President and his staff should not be involved in the reviewing or the dissemination of sensitive investigatory information involving any open investigation, let alone one about the activities of his own campaign. It is amazing. It is what you hear happening in third world countries. The leader says: No, I am above the law, and interferes with the process of law.

Congress has a right to oversight and to know what is going on after an investigation is complete. While an investigation is open and active, demands for oversight are tantamount to interference, especially when the folks demanding the information are the most biased, irresponsible actors. A man like DEVIN NUNES—I hear privately from my Republican colleagues that they think he is off the deep end—is going to get hold of this? We think that is fair, unbiased oversight?

Give me a break. If such a meeting occurs—and I don't believe it should, but if it occurs—it must be bipartisan to serve as a check on the disturbing tendency of the President's allies to distort facts and undermine the investigation and people conducting them.

Democratic Members of the House and Senate, the analogs of the Republicans selected to be in the room, should be in the room as well. So if DEVIN NUNES is there, ADAM SCHIFF should be there. To me, it is just amazing that it is happening.

One further point on this, again, the contradictory statements and opinions—the virtual hypocrisy of President Trump on these issues—are just mind-boggling.

President Trump, for instance, has been peddling the myth that a deep-state bias against his Presidency has animated the Russia probe. Of course, the idea is ridiculous. If there was such a deep state aligned against President Trump, why then was the active investigation into his campaign communications with Russian intelligence kept secret during the campaign? The deep state could have killed him in the election. If there was such a conspiracy against Donald Trump, why was the FBI investigation of his campaign under wraps, while at the same time, the FBI investigation into his opponent was in full view of the public eye? Whether or not you agree, Secretary of State and Presidential nominee Clinton believes that those comments by